

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

291649Z Aug 05

UNCLAS PARIS 005816

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR G, U/S DOBRIANSKY, OES, OES/IHA, EUR/WE; HHS FOR  
INTERNATIONAL/STEIGER/BUDASHEWITZ/GAY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF AVIAN INFLUENZA - FRENCH  
ARE FOCUSED

REF: SECSTATE 153802

1. (SBU) Only days following news that the H5N1 virus had hit the Urals, French media coverage regarding the consequences of a possible influenza pandemic has proliferated and the government has reacted. On August 24, President Chirac requested the appointment of an interministerial delegate (name not yet released) to coordinate the GOF's pandemic prevention measures, although the Ministry of Health will continue to serve as the lead French agency. The Prime Minister's Office convened an inter-agency meeting to consider the issues on the basis of the latest information. The government's strategic plan to address any future pandemic (last published in May) will be updated, and the government is stockpiling antiviral (Tamiflu) medicine.

2. (SBU) On August 26, ESTH Counselor presented points contained reftel to Messieurs Goyer and D'Oriano at the Health Office, Department of Development and Technical Cooperation, MFA, and separately to Messieurs Linois and Brunet, respectively, the new Diplomatic Counselor and Chief of the European and International Office, Ministry of Health. All described extensive efforts underway in the French government to coordinate preparations for a possible influenza pandemic. They indicated that likely the appropriate official to serve as an overall point-of-contact for the U.S. government on avian flu will be the interministerial delegate whose name has yet to be released.

3. (SBU) With regard to assistance for affected countries, French officials mentioned possible enhanced support to international organizations involved in health preventive undertakings, particularly the World Health Organization. They mentioned also a series of upcoming meetings at the national and EU levels to discuss preparedness measures and funding considerations. Health officials mentioned that prospects for the visit of new French Health Minister Xavier Bertrand to attend the upcoming Global Health Security meetings in Rome looked positive. At such time, the Minister looked forward to meeting Secretary Leavitt and discussing avian flu and other international health issues of concern to the U.S. and France. French officials expressed satisfaction with cooperation underway with the U.S. and were aware of the August 26 teleconference between HHS and the Pasteur Institutes in Paris and Hanoi regarding avian flu preparedness. They spoke highly of not only the scientific capabilities of the Pasteur Institute, but also its public health role in connection with infectious diseases prevention.

STAPLETON